



Task Force on Traffic Capacity Across the Chesapeake Bay

Meeting #1 Summary

Introduction

The first of five meetings of the Task Force on Traffic Capacity Across the Chesapeake Bay (Task Force) was held on Tuesday, May 24th from 7:00 to 8:30 PM in Annapolis, Maryland. The Task Force was appointed by Secretary Flanagan in January 2005 to help identify and understand the need for capacity across the Chesapeake Bay, in light of the growing congestion on the existing Bay Bridge. Two co-chairs, Senator Lowell Stoltzfus and Jim Lighthizer, were selected by Secretary Flanagan to lead and facilitate the Task Force meetings. In addition, 18 Task Force members and seven Ex-Officio Task Force members were appointed by the Secretary.

In addition to Co-chairs Senator Stoltzfus and Jim Lighthizer, the following Task Force members attended Meeting #1:

- Lon Anderson, Director of Government Relations, AAA Mid-Atlantic
- John S. Arnick, Maryland House of Delegates, District 6
- Sonny Bloxom, President of the Worcester County Commissioners
- Walter T. Coryell, Chestertown Chief of Police
- William H. Cox, Jr., Maryland Transportation Commissioner
- H. Victoria Goldsborough, Denton Councilwoman
- Rona E. Kramer, Senate of Maryland, District 14
- Mary Ann Love, Maryland House of Delegates, District 32
- James N. Mathias, Jr., Mayor of Ocean City
- Anthony J. O'Donnell, Maryland House of Delegates, District 29
- E. J. Pipkin, Senate of Maryland, District 36
- Susan Ellsworth Shaw, Calvert County Commissioner
- Richard A. Sossi, Maryland House of Delegates, District 36
- Walter Thompson, former President and CEO, Maryland Motor Truck Association
- W. Gregory Wims, President and CEO, Hammer and Nails, Inc.

Ex-Officio Members

- Robert L. Flanagan, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
- C. Ronald Franks, Secretary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Trent M. Kittleman, Executive Secretary, Maryland Transportation Authority
- Martin G. Madden, Chairman, Critical Area Commission
- Aris Melissaratos, Secretary, Department of Business and Economic Development (to be represented by Jim Rzepkowski)

The following Task Force and Ex-Officio members were not in attendance. All members were encouraged to send representatives if they could not attend. Representatives are shown in parentheses.



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- John C. Astle, Senate of Maryland, District 30 (represented by Lucy Etzel)
- Effie M. Elzey, Dorchester County Councilmember (no representative)
- Janet Greenip, Senate of Maryland, District 33 (represented by Brad Miller)
- Kendi P. Philbrick, Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment (represented by Stephen Pattison)
- Audrey E. Scott, Secretary, Maryland Department of Planning (represented by Jim Noonan)

All Task Force meetings are open to the public. According to the sign-in sheet from the meeting, 9 citizens attended Meeting #1. The meeting was also videotaped for broadcast on several local access channels. A copy of the videotape can also be made available upon request.

Agenda for Meeting #1

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (Secretary Robert L. Flanagan)
2. Task Force Introductions and Meeting Process (Senator Lowell Stoltzfus)
3. The Bay Bridge: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow (Executive Secretary Trent Kittleman)
4. Approach to Presentation of Issues (Mr. Dennis Simpson)
5. Preview of Meeting #2 (Mr. Jim Lighthizer)
6. Closing and Questions (Senator Lowell Stoltzfus)

The format of the meeting was based on a PowerPoint slide presentation (attached), which was made available electronically and in hardcopy to all attendees. In addition, the presentation can be downloaded from the project website at www.mdt.state.md.us.

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (Secretary Flanagan)

Secretary Flanagan kicked off the meeting by welcoming the Task Force members and describing the traffic congestion at the Bay Bridge and why it is critical to being taking action now. Secretary Flanagan explained that conditions are expected to worsen over the next twenty years and our best available data of future traffic projections may be underestimated. Most importantly, we are going to have to live with what we have now for the next 10 to 20 years.

2. Task Force Introductions and Meeting Process (Senator Lowell Stoltzfus)

Senator Stoltzfus outlined the format of the meetings and noted the Briefing Books that were sent to the Task Force members prior to the meeting. This was followed by introductions by each Task Force member and Ex-Officio member, where each member spoke about his or her connection to the Bay Bridge. Dennis Simpson, the Transportation Authority's Planning Manager, and the project manager for the Task Force process, then introduced the staff who will be supporting the Task Force.



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3. The Bay Bridge: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow (Executive Secretary Trent Kittleman)

Executive Secretary Kittleman began her presentation by introducing the topics that will be covered in Meetings #2, #3, and #4. Meeting #5 will be reserved for discussion and wrap-up.

- Meeting #2: Travel Demand and Infrastructure
- Meeting #3: Environmental Regulations and Inventories
- Meeting #4: Growth and Economic Development

Ms. Kittleman then presented a comprehensive history of the first and second spans of the Bay Bridge and the regional significance of the bridge. She followed the history of the Bay Bridge with a discussion of existing conditions (in 2004, 25 million vehicles crossed the bridge) and how the Authority had responded to growing traffic backups. Increasing demand has necessitated contra-flow operations during peak periods. In addition, the Authority is continuing to develop innovative solutions to improve traffic flow and to work with local municipalities, communities, and other State agencies to ease traffic conditions and create optimal flow during peak periods. Examples of these innovative solutions include:

- "Taking the Heat out of Summer Travel"
- Widening Toll-Plaza Departure
- Dedicating Westbound Contra-flow Lane for EZPass Customers
- Marketing EZPass in retail stores and online as a \$25 package
- A toll free number with a recorded message that reports traffic flow conditions in real time (to be available in the next month): 1-877-BAYSPAN.
- "State of the Bridge Message" System with Dynamic Message Signs
- Automatic cones that can retract when not needed for contra-flow operations. These cones make EZPass lanes clearly visible well in advance of the toll booth
- Promoting "Go Early and Stay Late," a program that would encourage vacationers to alter their travel times to avoid the most congested times.
- Public and Media Outreach

Ms. Kittleman also noted how the re-decking project has exacerbated traffic congestion and how other activities affect demand for the bridge. For example, in November 2004, a NASCAR event in Delaware resulted in an 18 mile back up to the bridge.

Ms. Kittleman then summarized the Bay Bridge Transportation Needs Report, which was published in December 2004, and describes the results of a study that was commissioned by the Authority to evaluate the needs at the existing bridge. This report was made available to all



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Task Force members and is available on the Authority website noted above. The report documents the existing and future conditions at the bridge, based on origin-destination patterns and anticipated population and job growth projections.

4. Approach to Presentation of Issues (Mr. Dennis Simpson)

Mr. Simpson outlined the zone approach for presenting the technical information in Meetings #2, #3, and #4. The Authority developed this approach by looking at the entire Bay in the state of Maryland and identifying four zones that could potentially support a new crossing. These zones are described below and were graphically depicted on a map and a handout:

- Zone 1: Baltimore County to Kent County (Historic northern crossing)
- Zone 2: Anne Arundel County to Queen Anne's County (Existing Bay Bridge)
- Zone 3: Anne Arundel /Calvert Counties to Talbot County (includes St. Michaels)
- Zone 4: Calvert County to Dorchester County (Historic southern crossing)

5. Preview of Meeting #2 (Mr. Jim Lighthizer)

Mr. Lighthizer introduced the topics for Meeting #2 (to be held on June 23, 2005) by summarizing the importance of the Bay Bridge to Maryland's vitality and the quality of life of its residents. Mr. Lighthizer noted that a new crossing would be an enormous project and a large challenge and that population is growing whether we want it or not. In general, the life of a bridge is about 80 years and the first span is already 50 years old. Therefore, the focus of Meeting #2 will be the demand for capacity across the Bay and the infrastructure needed to support this demand.

6. Closing and Questions (Senator Lowell Stoltzfus)

Senator Stoltzfus concluded the meeting by asking the Task Force if there were any questions about the information that was presented. No specific questions or comments were raised, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.